What is PISL?
Plains Indian Sign Language once served as a signed lingua franca among American Indian nations of the Great Plains.

Why study PISL?
PISL has been long overlooked, understudied, and considered by many a primitive, emblematic, or dying language. Researchers who have studied it have focused on the alternative (ad hoc) role of signing among male hearing community members only. Our research focuses on both alternative and primary acquisition patterns among deaf and hearing community members.

Who uses PISL today?
PISL is still being learned and used by some Native groups in traditional storytelling, rituals, various types of discourse, and conversational narratives.

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Our research focuses on both alternative and primary acquisition patterns among deaf and hearing community members.

Eudico Linguistic Annotator (ELAN)
ELAN is a tool for the creation of complex annotations on video/audio resources using captions, voices-over, slow motion, and annotations. Objective: to train Deaf and American Indian students and linguistics students to use ELAN for the transcription, translation, and annotation of signed and spoken languages.

Endnotes
- The use of ELAN and Eudico Linguistic Annotator offers insights into signed and spoken language contact; multilingualism and code-switching; the conveyance of human language in signed and spoken modalities; the interrelatedness and distinctiveness of speech, sign, and gesture; and also informs theories of language acquisition, contact, and change.

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National Science Foundation's Behavioral and Cognitive Sciences Documenting Endangered Languages

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Indian Nations using PISL today:
- Northern Cheyenne
- Gros Ventre
- Assiniboine
- Blackfeet
- Crow

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- Our research focuses on both alternative and primary acquisition patterns among deaf and hearing community members.
- The use of ELAN and Eudico Linguistic Annotator is contributing to the compilation of a PISL dictionary and grammar.
- The use of ELAN and collaboration with PISL community members are central to revitalization and the development of curricular materials.

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